

five levels of drought (abnormally dry, moderate, severe, extreme and exceptional) that are based on stream flows as well as lake, reservoir and ground water levels. Thirty-six counties are considered to be in a moderate drought and 36 counties are abnormally dry.

The drought has prompted 20 public water systems in North Carolina to issue voluntary water conservation restrictions and another eight water systems to issue mandatory water restrictions. The water systems that have issued mandatory water conservation are in Chatham, Johnston, New Hanover, Union and Wake counties.

Officials with the N.C. Drought Management Advisory Council earlier this week reported that streamflows in the counties suffering from extreme drought hit near-record lows in May. Agricultural impacts of the severe and extreme drought include low hay yields and vegetables, crops and cattle under stress. Officials with the N.C. Division of Forest Resources say the dry conditions continue to create high potential for wildfires and urge people to postpone outdoor burning until rainfall levels return to normal.

For more information on current drought conditions, go to www.ncdrought.org. State agencies that need guidance on water conservation measures should go to www.sustainablenc.org/neguidance.htm.

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